

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT: F-5 SALE TO SUDAN

1. FOLLOWING STORY APPEARED IN NEW YORK TIMES OF DECEMBER
23.

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QUOTE. THE UNITED STATES, IN A MOVE WITH IMPORTANT POLICY
IMPLICATIONS, INFORMED THE SUDAN RECENTLY THAT IT WAS NOW
WILLING TO SELL IT A SQUADRON OF 12 F-5 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT,
AMERICAN OFFICIALS SAID TODAY.

IF, AS EXPECTED, THE KHARTOUM GOVERNMENT AGREES TO BUY THE
PLANES, THIS WILL MARK THE FIRST TIME THE UNITED STATES

HAS SUPPLIED COMBAT AIRCRAFT TO THE SUDAN, WHICH HAS INTERESTS BOTH IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND IN BLACK AFRICA, AND LAST MAY EXPELLED ITS SOVIET MILITARY ADVISERS.

THE OFFICIALS SAID THAT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE UNITED STATES' WILLINGNESS TO MEET THE SUDANESE REQUEST, WHICH WAS FIRST MADE LAST DECEMBER. THE SUDAN, AN ALLY OF EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA, HAS BEEN CONCERNED OVER SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA, A RIVAL OF THE SUDAN, AND IN LIBYA. KHARTOUM HAS ACCUSED BOTH COUNTRIES OF BACKING OPPOSITION FORCES IN THE SUDAN.

CONGRESSIONAL SOURCES SAID THE F-5'S WOULD COST DOLS. 75 TO DOLS. 80 MILLION. TWO WOULD BE F-5 TRAINERS AND TEN F-5E'S, AN ADVANCED VERSION THAT BEGAN TO BE MADE IN 1973 AFTER THE ORIGINAL FIGHTER, THE F-5A, HAD BEEN IN PRODUCTION FOR A DECADE.

BOTH SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO PAY FOR THE PLANES, AND EGYPT HAVE URGED THE UNITED STATES TO SUPPLY THEM TO THE SUDAN.

IN APRIL, PRESIDENT CARTER APPROVED THE FIRST MILITARY SALE TO THE SUDAN, INVOLVING SIX C-130 HERCULES MILITARY TRANSPORTS. AT THAT TIME, FOREIGN MINISTER MANSUR KAHLID OF THE SUDAN WAS QUOTED AS HAVING SAID THAT AMERICAN

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OFFICIALS HAS ALSO "RESPONDED VERY KINDLY" TO A REQUEST FOR THE F-5'S.

FOLLOWING THE END OF THE SUDAN'S MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION, THE UNITED STATES SAID ON JULY 27 THAT IT WAS PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUDAN'S DEFENSE NEEDS.

IN AUGUST, A TEAM FROM THE ARMY, AIR FORCE, NAVY AND STATE DEPARTMENT WENT TO THE SUDAN TO STUDY ITS NEEDS. A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SAID TODAY THAT ITS EVALUATION WAS RECENTLY TRANSMITTED TO THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT AND IT "NOTED A SERIOUS DEFICIENCY IN THAT COUNTRY'S AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES AND AS A RESULT WE HAVE OFFERED TO SELL THE SUDANESE ONE SQUADRON OF AIR DEFENSE AIRCRAFT." IN ADDITION, THE SUDANESE WILL BE OFFERED RADAR EQUIPMENT.

THE SALE TO THE SUDAN HAS POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR BOTH THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA. IN VIEW OF THE SUDAN'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT, OFFICIALS HAVE RECOGNIZED THAT THE SALE OF F-5'S WOULD BE REGARDED BY ISRAEL'S SUPPORTERS AS TANTAMOUNT TO SELLING THE JETS TO EGYPT.

UNTIL NOW, THE EGYPTIANS HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO SO-CALLED NONLETHAL EQUIPMENT SUCH AS C-130'S AND DRONE RECONNAISSANCE PLANES. PRESIDENT ANWAR EL-SADAT HAS REPEATEDLY ASKED FOR F-5'S, AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT IF CONGRESS PERMITS THE SALE TO THE SUDAN, HE MAY BECOME MORE INSISTENT.

THE UNITED STATES HAS ALSO FOLLOWED A POLICY OF NOT SELLING ADVANCED EQUIPMENT TO BLACK AFRICA, BUT THE HEAVY INVOLVEMENT OF SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY ADVISERS HAS CHANGED THAT SITUATION. LAST YEAR, THE UNITED STATES APPROVED THE SALE OF A SQUADRON OF F-5'S TO KENYA.

AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE UNITED STATES IN JULY SAID IT UNCLASSIFIED

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WAS READY TO MEET THE SUDAN'S NEEDS, IT SAID IT WAS SYMPATHETIC TO REQUESTS FROM SOMALIA AND CHAD. BUT BECAUSE OF SOMALIA'S APPARENT INTERVENTION IN THE INSURRECTION OF ETHNIC SOMALIS IN ETHIOPIA'S OGADEN REGION, THE UNITED STATES HAS REFUSED TO SELL ARMS TO SOMALIA.

CONGRESSIONAL SOURCES SAID THEY WERE TOLD THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS ALSO INCLINED TO APPROVE THE SALE OF 60 F-15 FIGHTER-BOMBERS TO SAUDI ARABIA, ALTHOUGH NO FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN MADE. SUPPORTERS OF ISRAEL SAY THAT SAUDI ARABIA DOES NOT NEED THESE ADVANCED PLANES FOR ITS DEFENSE AND THEY COULD BE USED AGAINST ISRAEL.

FOR INSTANCE, SENATOR CLIFFORD P. CASE, REPUBLICAN OF NEW JERSEY, VOICED DOUBT TODAY THAT EITHER THE F-5'S FOR THE SUDANESE OR THE F-15'S FOR THE SAUDIS WERE "REALLY NEEDED FOR THEIR DEFENSE." IN AN INTERVIEW, HE SAID "ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS HAVE ADMITTED THAT THE SALES WERE PROPOSED FOR SYMBOLIC REASONS, AS SYMBOLS OF UNITED STATES SUPPORT." UNQUOTE.

2. CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE ON POSSIBLE F-5 SALE STATES:

QUOTE. IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN, A JOINT STATE-DEFENSE SURVEY TEAM WAS SENT TO KHARTOUM IN AUGUST TO EVALUATE THE DEFENSE POSTURE OF THE SUDANESE ARMED FORCES. THE TEAM EVALUATION, WHICH WAS RECENTLY TRANSMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN, NOTED A SERIOUS DEFICIENCY IN THAT COUNTRY'S AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES. AS A RESULT, WE HAVE OFFERED TO SELL ONE SQUADRON (12) OF AIR DEFENSE AIRCRAFT. WE HAVE NOTIFIED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO THIS EFFECT. AT PRESENT, THE UNCLASSIFIED

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GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN IS REVIEWING BOTH THE TEAM REPORT
AND OUR OFFER. UNQUOTE. VANCE

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TAGS: SOPN, MASS, US, SU
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